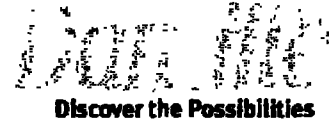


229337



April 5, 2011

The Honorable Daniel R. Elliot, III, Chairman  
Surface Transportation Board  
395 E Street SW, Suite 1220  
Washington, DC 20433-0001

Dear Chairman Elliot:

*Ex Parte 705*

I am writing to express unqualified support from the Office of Economic Development of the City of Danville, Virginia to encourage the maintenance of a strong national freight railroad network to assist the nation in its recovery from the Great Recession. The Staggers Rail Act has served us well for over thirty years, and we certainly do not want to see it decimated in any way.

For our region of the Commonwealth of Virginia, the movement of freight by rail is a key component of our strategy to recover from the loss of our anchor industries, tobacco and textiles, to globalization. Ours is a region that still relies on manufacturing to a significant degree, and the ability to ship by rail is very important to our being attractive to manufacturing operations. We are served by Norfolk Southern, and we have been gratified by just how cooperative Norfolk Southern has been in assisting our efforts to serve manufacturing businesses in southern Virginia. To weaken the current regulations that encourage reinvestment in the infrastructure of and by our freight railway systems would, we think, be a step in the wrong direction. There is always tension between the supply and demand aspects of any business, but from our perspective, we think that there is an excellent balanced regulatory regime in place today, and we urge that it be maintained. The Staggers Rail Act has proven its value to the economic vitality of localities across the country.

Thank you for your consideration of our position.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jeremy A. Stratton".

Jeremy A. Stratton, CEcD  
Director, Economic Development